

BA-1610

Willowbrook, (Anthony's Delight, Old Polo Club Grounds, Wilton Wood)

Architectural Survey File

This is the architectural survey file for this MIHP record. The survey file is organized reverse-chronological (that is, with the latest material on top). It contains all MIHP inventory forms, National Register nomination forms, determinations of eligibility (DOE) forms, and accompanying documentation such as photographs and maps.

Users should be aware that additional undigitized material about this property may be found in on-site architectural reports, copies of HABS/HAER or other documentation, drawings, and the “vertical files” at the MHT Library in Crownsville. The vertical files may include newspaper clippings, field notes, draft versions of forms and architectural reports, photographs, maps, and drawings. Researchers who need a thorough understanding of this property should plan to visit the MHT Library as part of their research project; look at the MHT web site (mht.maryland.gov) for details about how to make an appointment.

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Last Updated: 06-23-2004

c. 1825

BA 1610

WILLOWBROOK (WILTON WOOD)

1800 Green Spring Valley Road

Stevenson, Md. 21153

private

Willowbrook consists of two largely unchanged sections, the older section dating from the early 19th century, the newer from the mid-19th century. Most original woodwork remains. The house was used as a clubhouse for the Maryland Polo Club for ten years (beginning in 1926) while the meadow in front of the house was used as a polo field and the stables for polo ponies.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

BA 1610
x-880.610
y-578.500

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

MAGI #0316102304

1 NAME

HISTORIC

WILLOWBROOK (WILTON WOOD)

AND/OR COMMON

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

1800 Green Spring Valley Road

CITY, TOWN

Stevenson

STATE

Maryland

VICINITY OF

Third

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

COUNTY

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

☐ STRUCTURE

☐ SITE

☐ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

☐ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS

☐ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

☐ UNOCCUPIED

☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☐ YES: RESTRICTED

☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☒ NO

PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE

☐ COMMERCIAL

☐ EDUCATIONAL

☐ ENTERTAINMENT

☐ GOVERNMENT

☐ INDUSTRIAL

☐ MILITARY

☐ MUSEUM

☐ PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

☐ RELIGIOUS

☐ SCIENTIFIC

☐ TRANSPORTATION

☐ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

Thomas Wilson Smith

Telephone #: 486-3817

STREET & NUMBER

1800 Green Spring Valley Road

CITY, TOWN

Stevenson

VICINITY OF

Maryland, STATE, zip code 21153

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Baltimore
County Courts Building

STREET & NUMBER

401 Rosley Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Towson, Maryland 21204

STATE

Liber #: 1605

Folio #: 346

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED
<input type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		DATE _____

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The frame rear wing of the present house is the oldest section. Oriented with its principal front to the south, it consists of a two storey section to the east, three bays in length, and a one and one-half storey section to the west, two long bays in length. The lower section is traditionally thought to predate the taller but there is no visible evidence to suggest any construction predating ca. 1820-1830.

The one and one-half storey section measures approximately 18 by 25 feet with shed additions to the rear 9 feet wide; the two storey section measures approximately 16 by 25 feet, exclusive of the mid-twentieth century additions to the rear. These dimensions do not obviously relate to the dimensions recorded in the 1798 Federal Direct Tax for structures on this property.

The principal section of the house today is the two storey brick section which fronts to the east, five bays in length, added ca. 1861. In the mid-twentieth century the middle frame section was deepened to the north.

The windows of the frame section are all set in narrow beaded frames with louvred blinds. Its principal entrance is in the westerly bay of the two storey section. It opens into a narrow stair hall and a single room is to the east, a fireplace centered on its east wall. Most original woodwork remains including the routed architraves, the doors with six partially-raised panels, the mantel with its slim Tuscan columns supporting a paneled frieze and the staircase with its slim turned newels. The chair rail and paneled wainscot are modern additions.

The one and one-half storey westerly section is two rooms in length; a chimney rises between them, fireplaces in each, the westerly one, probably large for cooking, now closed. A secondary stair rises enclosed and winding south of the kitchen chimney. Narrow shed additions to the north include an early pantry. The earliest trim in this section appears to be contemporary with, but simpler than, that in the two storey section immediately to the east.

A one storey porch extends across the east facade of the brick section and a gable in the east front roof gives added emphasis to the principal entrance below with its double doors, sidelights

and transom. The doors have bold bolection panel mouldings, arched at the top. Windows are 6/6 with narrow frames and louvred blinds. The little tripartite window of the attic gable consists of three gothic-arched lancets set within a low four-centered arch. Pairs of bold scrolled brackets support the cornice which extends up the rakes of the east gable as well as the north and south end gables.

A wide hall is centered in the brick section and that section's staircase is in its own hall at the northwest corner. Interior partitions are of brick construction. Most interior detailing is original and unchanged including the paneled doors set in matching paneled jambs, architraves with bold backbands, the staircase with its massive newels, the plaster cornices and the black and white marble mantels.

The second storey of each section is similar to the first but simpler and only slightly changed to accomodate modern bathrooms. The marble mantels and plaster cornices in the mid-nineteenth century wing indicate the importance given to this section by its affluent builder.

A cellar extends beneath the entire brick wing and only under the two storey section of the frame wing. A large fireplace in the southerly cellar room of the brick wing, fitted with a crane for cooking, indicates the kitchen of that period. First floor joists of all three sections are straight sawn. A cellar stair once descended beneath the stair of the taller frame wing.

West of the dwelling is a small barn, probably originally a grainery. Its first storey walls are of stone, its second storey walls of braced-frame construction using hewn timbers. Rafters are pegged at the ridge and smaller structural members are pit-sawn. The projecting beam beneath the second storey door in the east gable and the projecting roof above that gable suggests that an exterior stair might have ascended to that door, typical of many graineries remaining in the regions immediately north. The date 1828 is cut into a large stone of the south wall.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

WILLOWBROOK consists of two largely-unchanged sections, both built by moderately prosperous owners, the older section dating from the early nineteenth century, the newer from the mid-nineteenth century. The dated (1828) barn (or former grainery) is a valuable guide in the dating of other construction in the region and together with the history of ownership it is a strong clue to the date of the earliest section of the dwelling.

The earliest section of Willowbrook (Wilton Wood) is believed to have been built circa 1826-1830 by William and Elizabeth (Cockey) Anderson. Elizabeth was the great-grand-daughter of Captain John Cockey (b. 1681/1683, d. prior to 22 July 1747), a prosperous tobacco farmer who had acquired some 1300 acres in the eastern end of the Green Spring Valley by the 1740's. Among his holdings were the 278 acres--being all of Anthony's Delight, Tye's Delight, and Cow Hill--which were to become the Willowbrook farm.¹

Elizabeth had inherited this farm, which then was known as Wilton Wood, in 1824 from her father John Cockey (1758-1824).² He had bought the estate at the death of its third Cockey owner, his cousin Dr. Joshua Frederick Cockey (1797-1821), "the younger physician."³ John paid \$6,544.65 for the land and "a log dwelling house, barn, and spring house."⁴ None of these buildings remain, and it is assumed they were probably torn down when Elizabeth and her husband built the new house.

Elizabeth had married William Anderson in 1826. They built the small stone and frame barn which still stands behind the present house. The date 1828 is clearly etched into the exterior of the barn's south wall and, along with the architect's findings, helps to date the construction of the older section of the house.

No information has come to light on the Anderson family. William was apparently deceased by 1850, for the U. S. Census lists only Elizabeth Anderson, age fifty; her two daughters, Elizabeth A. and Kate; and a laborer.⁵ At that time the farm was valued at \$10,000.⁶

Between 1850 and 1854 Elizabeth A. married Basil C. S. Bennett and, at her mother's death in 1866, she inherited the Valley property.⁷ It was the Bennett family who made the brick addition to the house as evidenced by a letter written on 12 March 1861 by Mrs. George Howard Elder of Green Spring in which she remarked, "Mr. Bennett is preparing to build."⁸

Basil Bennett was a farmer and he, too, called the farm Wilton Wood. A Methodist, he is buried at Stone Chapel. When he died in 1864 he left the farm to his wife, to pass at her death to his son and/or daughter, whoever was then surviving.⁹

An inventory of Bennett's personal estate was filed on 10 October 1864 and an appraisal figure of \$3,822.03 given.¹⁰ Debts in the amount of \$688.02 were also due the deceased. His inventory included farm equipment; tools for his blacksmith shop; house furnishings; numerous volumes of books, including Gibbon's History, Clark's Commentaries, and the works of Milton and Shakespeare. This "library" gives credence to the story that a small private school was held in this home in the 1870's.¹¹ One intriguing item in the inventory was a "one-half interest in Stump machine" valued at \$15.

The widowed Mrs. Bennett advertised her 200 acre farm for rent in March 1884, stating that "only a neat experienced practical farmer with good stock and farming implements need apply."¹² With her death in 1896 Wilton Wood passed to her son William Anderson Bennett.¹³ He died intestate in 1918, leaving a wife and five older children.

Seven years later the estate was sold to settle a dispute between Bettie C. Bennett, widow, et al., complainant, and Basil C. S. Bennett, et al., defendants.¹⁴ The farm, then 286 3/4 acres in size, was sold for \$72,750 to the General Development Company.¹⁵

The Wilton Wood Development Company purchased the property a year later with plans for residential development.¹⁶ However, after a brief two month period the

estate was sold to the Polo Land Company which, on the same day in 1926, leased 37 acres, the house, and the stables to the Maryland Polo Club, Incorporated, for ten years.¹⁷

The Club remodeled the home into a club house and turned the nearby meadow into a regulation polo field. Polo matches were well-attended by sports enthusiasts until the 1940's. During the war, when the club was inactive, J. W. Y. Martin, who held the club's mortgage, was forced to foreclose, and the property was sold in 1944 to Edward P. Colwill.¹⁸

Three years Colwill sold the 37 acres and buildings to the present owners, the Thomas Smiths.¹⁹ They undertook a remodeling effort in the 1950's.²⁰ Thomas Smith is a descendant of Robert Smith, first Secretary of the Navy, and General Samuel Smith, a defender of the City of Baltimore in the War of 1812. The Smiths changed the name of the house to Willowbrook after a nearby brook and a stand of trees.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Baltimore County Wills (BCW), #A/360, Hall of Records (HR), Annapolis, Maryland.

² BCW, WBL #12/70, HR

³ Baltimore County Land Records (BCLR), WG #167/175, HR

⁴ Ibid.; Federal Gazette and Baltimore Daily Advertiser, 1 January 1823.

⁵ United States Census for Baltimore County, District One, 1850, folio 415, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Maryland.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ BCW, #3/99, Towson.

⁸ Mrs. George Howard Elder to "Lizzie" (Sally Elizabeth Elder), 12 March 1861, Elder family letters in the possession of Mrs. H. Benthall Marshall, a granddaughter of Sally Elizabeth (Elder) Spencer.

⁹ BCW, #2/343, Towson.

¹⁰ Baltimore County Inventories, #6/168, Towson.

¹¹ Interview with Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Smith by Dawn F. Thomas, 31 May 1973.

¹² (Towson) Maryland Journal, 1 March 1884.

¹³ See note 9.

¹⁴ BCIP, WPC #625/167, Towson.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ BCLR, WBC #639/60, Towson.

¹⁷ Ibid.; BCLR #640/507, Towson.

¹⁸ BCLR, LM_{CLM} #915/57, and #1367/51, Towson.

¹⁹ BCLR, #1605/346, Towson

²⁰ See note 11.

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

Thomas, Dawn F. and Robert W. Barnes. The Green Spring Valley: Its History and Heritage, 2 vols. Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1978.

Baltimore County Land Records, County Courts Bldg., Towson, Md.

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY 37

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

James Thomas Wollon, Jr., A.I.A., and Dawn F. Thomas

2-7-80

ORGANIZATION

Valleys Planning Council

DATE

828-7807

STREET & NUMBER

212 Washington Avenue, Towson, Md. 21204

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

STATE

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438





BA 1610

Willowbrook

GSVHD

Gr. Sprn. Vly.

JTW

1-79

Md. Hist. Tr.

from SE